



From the Wire

18 WG Career Assistance Advisor



President signs 2003 defense appropriations package

(AFPN)-- President Bush signed the fiscal 2003 Defense Appropriations Act on Oct. 23, giving the military \$355 billion with which to confront "grave new dangers."

This year's defense bill authorizes the military to spend more than \$37 billion above last year's budget.

"The security of the American people is the first commitment of the American government," Bush said. "Our nation must fully support the men and women of our military who confront these dangers on our behalf."

According to the president, the legislation authorizes a 4.1 percent pay raise for servicemembers, provides additional full-time support personnel for the National Guard and Reserve, and continues to reduce the out-of-pocket cost for housing.

Besides the appropriations bill, Bush signed the 2003 Military Construction Appropriations Act, authorizing \$10.5 billion for building and upgrading installations and military family housing.

"We're taking care of our people," Bush said. "We want the people who wear the uniform to know America appreciates their service."

In authorizing nearly \$58 billion for research and development, the bill allows the Air Force to make major advances in transformational technology.

"The bill ends some weapons systems that aren't going to meet the needs of the future," the president said. "Instead we will fund new systems, systems that will enable our military to do a more effective job at defending America and our freedoms, systems such as unmanned aerial vehicles like the Predator and Global Hawk that we've used so effectively in Afghanistan."

The bill:

- Provides \$265 million for B-2 Spirit bomber research and development.
- Authorizes \$4.7 billion for R&D and procurement of 23 F-22 Raptors.
- Provides \$3.3 billion to purchase 15 C-17 Globemaster III airlift aircraft.
- Allows \$3.5 billion for Joint Strike Fighter R&D.
- Appropriates more than \$7 billion for ballistic missile defense.
- Provides \$770 million for the purchase of satellite-guided Joint Direct Attack Munitions.
- Grants \$882 million for the joint-service drug interdiction mission.
- Provides \$150 million for breast cancer and prostate cancer research.

"(This bill) sends a clear signal to friend and foe alike, that it doesn't matter how long it takes to defend our freedom; the United States of America will stay the course," Bush said.

"The bill says America is determined and resolute to not only defend our freedom, but freedom around the world," he said. "We're determined and resolute to answer the call to history, and that we will defeat terror."



Air Force seeks improved retention through GI Bill test program

(AFPN) -- The Air Force will soon begin testing a retention tool designed to help some servicemembers provide for their family's education.

As part of the Montgomery GI Bill Transferability Test Program, members working in selected critical career fields will be able to transfer a portion of their MGIB benefits to one or more family members. Both commissioned and enlisted members will be eligible.

Senior Master Sgt. Joey Walker, chief of retention policy for the Air Force directorate of learning force development, said the program gives servicemembers another great reason to sign on the dotted line.

"There are many factors that influence a person's decision to stay in the Air Force," Walker said. "This is a great initiative we can use to target (Air Force career fields) experiencing low retention."

For enlisted members to take advantage of this targeted re-enlistment benefit, they must re-enlist between Oct. 1 and Sep. 30, 2003, have between six and 12 years time-in-service, already be eligible for MGIB benefits and work in one of the selected critical Air Force specialties.

The career fields for enlisted members include linguists, firefighters and communications computer system programmers. Officer career fields include developmental engineers, scientists and civil engineers. To be eligible, these officers must meet the same time-in-service requirement as enlisted members, agree to incur a four-year active-duty service commitment during fiscal 2003 and already be eligible for MGIB benefits.

Air Force members meeting the eligibility criteria for the test program will be able to transfer up to 18 months of their MGIB benefits to their spouse, children or a combination of both.

Implementation plans for the proposed policy are being reviewed by officials at the Air Force Personnel Center, so the program has not yet been activated; however, servicemembers who meet the criteria and who have already extended their service commitment will be eligible for the benefit.

"The program is not active yet because we have not sent implementation procedures out to the field," said Jim Sweizer, chief of the voluntary education branch for the Air Force directorate of learning and force development. "But everybody who meets the criteria and who extends (his or her) active-duty service commitment during fiscal 2003 is still eligible for this benefit."

All those taking advantage of the benefits of the test program will eventually be surveyed to determine the weight of the MGIB transferability option on their decision to extend their time in service. The results of the survey will help determine the continuation of the program.

Servicemembers wanting more information about the Montgomery GI Bill Transferability Test Program should contact their local education office.

Air Force Online 'myPay' Debuts

(Armed Forces News) -- A program designed to help Air Force members manage their pay went online Oct. 15. Formerly named the Employee/Member Self-Service program, myPay offers improved online services for active-duty, Guard and Reserve airmen, civilian employees, retirees and beneficiaries, said Bruce S. Lemkin, principal Air Force deputy for financial management. He added that members can view, print and save leave and earning statements; change federal and state tax withholdings; update bank account and electronic funds transfer information; edit address information; and control Thrift Savings Plan enrollment. "One of our goals is to allow customers to do online anything that they previously had to stand in line (at the finance office) to accomplish," said Tom Bloom, DFAS director. Members with a current E/MSS personal identification number can log into myPay immediately. Access can be gained from <http://www.dfas.mil/emss>.

Air Force opens facility manager special duty again

(AFPN) -- Tech. Sgt. Robert Quay likes self-help projects, the wide open spaces of the West and working only nine to 12 days per month.

That is why he is perfect for the job as a missile facility manager at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.

Quay, an information manager with the Air Force Communications Agency in the Pentagon, is one of a growing number who are who are opting to drop out of their career fields for the four-year special-duty assignment.

Nearly 200 positions, advertised on Equal Plus since April, are available, said Master Sgt. Larry Dunbar, superintendent of ICBM operations at Air Force Space Command headquarters here.

"It's good for someone who likes a stable tour," he said. "Usually people who are in a career field with a high deployment rate are interested. There are no (temporary duty assignments)."

Going to work, however, could be a TDY within itself. Managers sometimes have to commute as far as 160 miles from base to report to an alert facility. Once there the manager runs the alert facility for three days at a time.

The job duties are relatively simple: maintain the power supply, water treatment, supplies, publications, equipment and housing arrangements for the missile alert crew, the transient

maintenance crew and security forces at the facility. They might be called upon to perform tasks ranging from providing medical attention to a crewmember to removing snow.

In short, facility managers are the jack of all trades -- a concierge to about 20 people either on alert or maintaining and guarding America's powerful Minutemen and Peacekeeper missile force.

"It's kind of like a small hotel in the middle of the prairie," said Quay, who has been a missile facility manager before in Montana. "We're there to try to help the crews. I find it very rewarding."

Three years ago, the job was closed as a special duty and incorporated into the missile maintenance career field. It was a controversial move, Dunbar said, because the career field was not large enough to support requirements.

Now the Air Force is again looking for independent people willing to spend four years in remote locations three days at a time, making sure the facility runs smoothly.

"When I heard it was open again, I was one of the first to apply," Quay said. "It's great for those who love the wide open spaces of the West, especially if you get six days off."

Applicants must be staff sergeants to senior master sergeants. They will be assigned to Malmstrom; Minot AFB, N.D.; or F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., and must have a secret clearance. They must also have no record of emotional instability, disciplinary action or financial irresponsibility. The Special Duty Code is 8S000.

Air Force exceeds 2002 recruiting goal

(AFPN) -- Air Force Recruiting Service officials here have reported completing the most successful recruiting year in almost two decades. Now, Air Force officials have renewed their fight to recruit enlisted airmen, doctors, nurses and engineers to fill critical positions in fiscal 2003.

The Air Force achieved 102 percent of its fiscal 2002 enlisted recruiting goal, bringing a total of 37,967 airmen to Air Force active duty. The goal was 37,283. Almost 99 percent of those enlisting this year are high school graduates and many have college credit.

"We had a phenomenal year for enlisted recruiting," said Brig. Gen. Edward A. Rice Jr., commander of AFRS here. "Our front-line recruiters worked hard to recruit some of the most highly qualified young men and women this great country has to offer."



Rice attributed the recruiting success this year to several specific factors.

"We increased the number of Air Force recruiters, offered enlistment bonuses and continued to aggressively market and advertise the Air Force to America's youth," he said. "But the real key to success has been hard work."

Competition in the marketplace for health care professionals and engineers, however, continues to be a big challenge for the Air Force.

"Air Force accessions for physicians, nurses and technical professionals continue to fall short of Air Force requirements," Rice said.

The general said AFRS would continue to focus its efforts on officer accessions in these key areas and work exceptionally hard to make up some lost ground early in the new fiscal year.

Air Force recruiters have been working for months to recruit young men and women to meet the fiscal 2003 enlisted requirements.

"When we met our enlistment contract goal of 37,283 on May 2, the earliest in more than 15 years, recruiters immediately set their sites on next year's anticipated goal of more than 37,000," said Col. James Holaday, chief of the AFRS operations division.

Holaday added that AFRS began the new fiscal year with more than 50 percent of the enlistment contracts already signed for the upcoming year.

CMSAF: Quality of life a priority

(AFPN) -- As the backbone of the world's premier air and space force, the Air Force's enlisted corps deserves a quality of life unmatched by any military organization in the world, according to the service's top enlisted airman.

Providing that quality of life, said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray, requires more than just building bigger homes and procuring better benefits. It means giving them sound leadership, a good organization and a good "team" atmosphere.

"The Air Force is a people-oriented force, and we will always do our best to provide our great men and women with these things," said Murray, who became the 14th chief master sergeant of the Air Force on July 1, succeeding Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch.

Perhaps now more than ever, he said, recruiting and retaining the Air Force's enlisted force is critical and is the reason why improving their quality of life is important as well.

A native of Boiling Springs, N.C., Murray believes it is only fair to provide these dedicated airmen with quality workplaces and housing, more educational opportunities and better pay and compensation. Fortunately, he added, many of those things are on track in the near future. But more is needed.

"It appears that the fiscal 2003 budget will give us a good pay raise, but we're still seeking another targeted raise in fiscal 2004," he said. "Pay for our junior enlisted is very comparable with those of similar experience and training in the civilian sector but lags behind in our senior (noncommissioned officer) grades. The targeted raise emphasizes increased education, experience and, most importantly, leadership of our NCO corps."

This education, experience and leadership has made the Air Force NCO corps the best in the world and is vital because today's NCOs must train and supervise airmen in their technical areas to become mission proficient, and prepare them to lead the force in the future, Murray said.

"Our junior NCOs are the front-line supervisors, and they must have their attention focused on leading the force," he said. "We all have aspirations to move up in rank and status, but our focus should be projected downward. Our priority should be on improving our skills and becoming better leaders for those entrusted to us."

Murray said he would like to see enlisted professional military education focus more on the service's core competencies, combat readiness and other military aspects of leadership.

"Sometimes we over-emphasize the academic portion of PME when we really need to prepare better combat leaders," he said. "Don't get me wrong, our professional military education and NCO corps are the best in the world, but we can always strive to be better."

That attitude is the basis of transformation and why the Air Force implemented the air and space expeditionary force construct. He said increasing understanding and awareness among airmen of the AEF mind-set and how it is designed to improve their quality of life is critical.

"Air Force leaders are committed to the AEF cycle of 90-day deployments every 15 months," he said. "It's a promise we've made and we're working to keep it."

Getting the AEF mind-set established among "bluesuiters" should be a simple matter, he said. After all, everything the Air Force does is cyclical.

"For years, the Air Force has operated on an annual cycle for everything from aerobic testing to suicide awareness and chemical warfare training," Murray said. "We're working to establish these according to the AEF cycle, every 15 months."

Fortunately, he said, the system is evolving into what Air Force leaders envisioned. When the service first implemented the AEF construct, about 80,000 people were assigned to deploy. Today, more than 260,000 are assigned to deployment codes. But there is still much work to do in perfecting AEF.

"We need to reduce the stresses on those airmen who are being tapped for multiple deployments or are being asked to deploy for a longer period of time," Murray said.

While senior leaders work those issues at their level, individuals and units must focus on changing the mind-set of everyday operations from a home-based force to an expeditionary force, he said.

"We must expect that we are going to deploy; it's what we do," the chief said. "Everything we do should support that, from training and maintaining our wartime proficiencies to ensuring our families are prepared to endure our absence during a deployment."

"Once a deployment ends and a person returns home, the cycle should begin again, starting with the three R's -- reunite, rest and recuperate -- then right back into the process that ensures we are ready to deploy again when called upon."



As the AEF process evolves, he said, readiness continues to climb. "The current force is more ready to fight than any other time in history," he said.

"The majority of our airmen are trained and ready because they are in the AEF and have been deployed, some to tough locations," Murray said. "These deployments have made our people mentally and physically ready to accomplish the mission. And that is one of the greatest benefits of the AEF construct."

The chief said he knows the sacrifices Air Force people and their families are making daily and encourages them to remember how important their contributions are to the war on terrorism and the mission.

"When I go out to the field, airmen tell me they're working hard, but they also tell me they're more than ready to do what is necessary," he said. "I am extremely proud of our enlisted force, and I know they will continue to meet whatever challenges the future holds."

100-percent tuition assistance now available

(AFPN) -- Beginning Oct. 1, Air Force people can take advantage of a new Department of Defense tuition assistance policy that pays 100 percent of the cost of tuition for off-duty courses, according to Air Force education officials.

"The policy pays tuition costs and mandatory fees for up to a maximum of \$250 per semester hour, or \$750 per three-hour course," said Jim Sweizer, chief of the Air Force voluntary education branch at the Pentagon.

The policy also includes a \$4,500-per-year tuition assistance ceiling.

"In the past, we only paid instructional fees, such as a lab fee for science courses," Sweizer said. "Under the new policy, as long as the total cost falls under the authorized total, the student doesn't have to pay any money out of (his or her) pocket."

Tuition assistance still cannot be used to pay for textbooks unless they are included in an academic institution's published tuition rates, he said.

Sweizer is concerned that with 100-percent tuition assistance available to airmen, some people may opt to waive contributing to the Montgomery GI Bill. He encourages airmen to take advantage of the GI Bill's benefits.

"Not everyone will be able to complete his or her education while on active duty," he said. "Having the MGIB as an alternative for later use is a wise investment."

Local education centers have more information regarding the new tuition assistance policy.

Leaders seeking supervisor stress feedback

(AFPN) -- Air Force senior leaders will soon rely on supervisors to help them get a more accurate picture of the stresses that airmen are experiencing at their duty stations. Beginning in November, supervisors will use a Web-based data collection tool to document the number of hours their people are working and any work requirements they had to perform outside the work center.

"This personnel (work) load information will be compiled and given to Air Force leaders," said Lt. Col. Julia Gonzales, chief of the Air Force personnel directorate's wartime utilization branch at the Pentagon. "This collected PERSLOAD data is important because it will aid senior leaders in making better informed decisions and recommendations on how to relieve the stresses facing many career fields."

PERSLOAD differs from personnel tempo because it addresses the workload and requirements airmen face at their duty stations and not the number and duration of temporary duty and deployments that airmen experience.

"The study will measure approximately 20 Air Force Specialty Codes at each of the Air Force's main operating bases," according to Capt. Dennis Miller, chief of the requirements determination flight at the Air Force Manpower and Innovation Agency at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. "Not every supervisor will be required to participate in the collection effort. By using representative sampling, we're actually only measuring about 10 percent of any given AFSC's population."

For example, if a given AFSC can be found at all Air Force bases, this PERSLOAD data would only need to be measured at about 12 different bases worldwide.

Supervisors of the selected work centers at these bases will be responsible for inputting this information into the Web-based data collection tool at the end of each week. The entire process is designed to be very easy to use and should take no more 30 minutes to complete.

The data for each person will be entered based upon their primary AFSC skill level and then by whether they are a first- or second-term airman or a career airman. By breaking down the data this way, Air Force leaders hope to be able to use this information in retention analysis.

"One goal of the PERSLOAD study is to try and determine if there is a correlation between workweek hours and retention," Miller said. "We don't know if there is any correlation but we hope this collection attempt will help us determine if there is."

The results of the first quarter's data will be briefed to senior leaders in February.

"From there, we will make a determination as to how long this process needs to continue," Miller said. "However, we envision that it will take at least several quarters worth of data to get a truly representative picture of just how hard and long our people are working."

The data collected not only will help senior leaders determine where resources can be realigned to provide the most effective relief for stressed areas but can also help local commanders, Miller said.

"At the wing level, this data could put the spot light on stressed units or AFSCs and help local commanders look for ways that they might be able to fix some of the causes such as eliminating low priority tasks or moving additional details to other non-stressed units," Gonzales said.

This is an opportunity for supervisors to help Air Force leaders help airmen. "The data collected from this study will be a gauge from which senior leaders can make informed resource decisions to best alleviate the stresses on our career fields," Miller said.

Academy mascot vying for national title

(AFPN) -- He doesn't have the pageantry of the Indian on the horse with the flaming spear, the "homeyness" of that dog from Tennessee, or the in-your-face attitude of that "other" bird in South Florida.

He lacks the tradition of the guy in the leprechaun suit, the ability to pull a wagon like that Oklahoma pony, and the raw power of that big ole Colorado ox.

But, there is one thing the Air Force Academy's mascot has that the rest do not. The "Bird," as he is commonly referred to in Colorado Springs, possesses a firm grip on second place in the Mascot of the Year contest, sponsored by Capital One Bank. And he is very quickly gaining ground on the pussycat from Penn State.

As of Oct. 24, the Bird had captured 35 percent of the vote during the contest, a close second behind Penn State University's "The Nittany Lion," who has 36 percent. A distant third was "Sebastian the Ibis" from the University of Miami with 21 percent.



Pam Girado, Capital One spokeswoman, said the contest is a good way to recognize the team mascots, who she called the "unsung heroes" of college sporting events.

"Each year the best college football players are named to the All-America teams, and for the first time ever, college mascots will have their own team," she said. "Mascots have a passion and energy that keeps thousands of college football fans screaming and yelling and coming back each week for great football."

In addition to the USAFA, PSU and UM, the 12 finalists for this year's crown include the mascots from the University of Florida, the University of Tennessee, the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Alabama, Western Kentucky University, Georgia Tech University, the University of Montana, Syracuse University and the University at Buffalo.

First Lt. Chris Backus, cheerleading coach, said the Bird plays a key role in establishing the right atmosphere at academy games.

"Sometimes it can get really intense during the game," he said. "The Bird adds a little levity to the situation. He's big crowd favorite, especially with the kids."

Tryouts are held each year to determine which academy student will don the uniform and perform before thousands on Saturdays, he added.

"We hold tryouts at the beginning of the year for new mascots, and we judge them on creativity," he said. "They do a skit, and have to have a specific walk and mannerisms. You don't want someone who doesn't look like the bird."

If the team's performance is any indication, this year's selectee is obviously doing something right. The Falcons were 6-1 going into the Oct. 26 game at Wyoming, and need only a win Nov. 9 at Army to wrap up the Commander in Chief's Trophy, recognizing the top team among the military academies.

Fans across the country can vote for their favorite mascot through real-time, online polling at <http://www.capitalonebowl.com/>.

On the lighter side

Murphy's Laws Of Computers -----

1. When computing, whatever happens, behave as though you meant it to happen.
2. When you get to the point where you really understand your computer, it's probably obsolete.
3. The first place to look for information is in the section of the manual where you least expect to find it.
4. When the going gets tough, upgrade.
5. For every action, there is an equal and opposite malfunction.
6. To err is human...to blame your computer for your mistakes is even more human, it is downright natural.
7. He who laughs last probably made a back-up.
8. If at first you do not succeed, blame your computer.
9. A complex system that does not work is invariably found to have evolved from a simpler system that worked just fine.
10. The number one cause of computer problems is computer solutions.
11. A computer program will always do what you tell it to do, but rarely what you want it to do.

2003 Pay Raise Percentage Breakout

Officers															
PAY GRADE	<2	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
O-10	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-9	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-8	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-7	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	5.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-6	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-5	8.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-4	9.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-3	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-2	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-1	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WITH OVER 4 YEARS ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE AS AN ENLISTED MEMBER OR WARRANT OFFICER															
PAY GRADE	<2	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
O-3E	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-2E	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
O-1E	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
ENLISTED															
PAY GRADE	<2	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
E-9	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.5%
E-8	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.5%	6.0%	6.0%	4.1%	4.1%
E-7	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-6	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.5%	6.0%	6.0%	5.5%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-5	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	6.5%	6.0%	6.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-4	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-3	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-2	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-1 >4	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
E-1 <4	4.1%														